A U Ω

Know that there is no enlightenment from without; the secret of things is revealed from within. Do not think I tell you that which you know not; for except you know it, it cannot be given you. To him that hath it is given, and he hath the more abundantly.
—*Hermetic Philosophy*

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MR. JUDGE'S ARTICLES

MARCH is an appropriate month to call particular attention to the pamphlet series of the articles by William Q. Judge. With the one which comes to readers at this time, there are ten such pamphlets, and many more will appear in the future. Most of his articles fall naturally into groups which represent the fundamental ideas and teachings of Theosophy—making pamphlets titled *Reincarnation, Karma, Cycles, Cyclic Evolution, The Theosophical Movement, Occult Philosophy,* and similar topics. Besides affording ready accessibility of this material, the pamphlets have the noticeable effect of giving focus to the *power* of Mr. Judge's thought, which becomes more evident when his writings on one subject are gathered in a single publication.

Olympian vision and power are certainly the characteristics of the work of H.P.B. She spoke to all the world, and for centuries to come. Mr. Judge wrote especially for the common people, drawing on the same wisdom but using a language well within the understanding of all. Yet despite this down-to-earth prose, the strength of the philosophy comes through to the reader undiminished—or perhaps even amplified, by reason of the unpretentious character of the form. From this writing by Mr. Judge, then, the student comes to realize that, by one who knows the Theosophical philosophy through and through, what needs to be said can be put with great clarity in everyday language, suffering no reduction in either depth or inspiration. And at the same time one feels in Mr. Judge's work the warmth of a great heart, which may be the best explanation of the rare simplicity of which he was capable.

THE WAY OF AMMONIUS

IN "Le Phare De L'Inconnu," an article H.P.B. wrote for a French Theosophical journal in the fourteenth year of the Society, the part played by intuition in the search for truth has this description:

> Every one of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, that is known by the name of *intuition,* but how rare are those who know how to develop it! It is, however, only by the aid of this faculty that men can ever see things in their true colours. It is an *instinct of the soul,* which grows in us in proportion to the employment we give it, and which helps us to perceive and understand the realities of things with far more certainty than can the simple use of our senses and exercise of our reason. What are called good sense and logic enable us to see only the appearances of things, that which is evident to everyone. The *instinct* of which I speak, being a projection of our perceptive consciousness, a projection which acts from the subjective to the objective, and not *vice versa,* awakens in us spiritual senses and power to act; these senses assimilate to themselves the essence of the object or of the action under examination, and represent it to us as it really is, not as it appears to our physical senses and to our cold reason.

These words are plain enough, yet discerning their inner meaning presents problems. How shall one know that his "intuition" is active and working? Conceivably, by reaching a condition where such questions no longer arise. We walk a path hedged on one side by the insecurities of doubt and on the other by the short-lived growths of egotism. To doubt oneself is to suffer the weaknesses which result from separation, while spiritual arrogance is again an ill of separation. At the outset of this article, H.P.B. quotes from an old book:

> Happy are they who remain blind to these false deceivers; more happy still those who never turn their eyes from the only true Beacon-light whose eternal flame burns in solitude in the depths of the water of the Sacred Science. Numberless are the pilgrims that desire to enter those waters; very few are the strong swimmers who reach the Light. He who gets there must have ceased to be a number, and have become *all numbers.* He must have forgotten the illusion of separation, and accept only the truth of collective individuality. He must see with the ears,

> hear with the eyes, understand the language of the rainbow, and have concentrated his six senses in his seventh sense.

We have here more light, but, in consequence, another sort of obscurity. By forgetting the illusion of separation—which brings the freedom natural to thinking of and serving others—one gains protection against certain false steps. But what is the "language of the rainbow"?

Throughout the teachings of Theosophy are frequent references to the language of symbolism, the language of color and sound, which the initiate reads as easily as we apprehend familiar objects with the senses. But for this language—sometimes called the Mystery Language—we have no "dictionary." We are, in effect, given to understand that *we* are the dictionary.

But we still feel the need of an outside dictionary to comprehend the inside dictionary of our own nature. And this, surely, is the central dilemma of our human or psychic nature—both the lock and the key of the mystery of being human. We often speak of mind and soul as though they were possessions; they have a verbal and logical reality but not a substantial reality. That we *are* mind seems to escape us. Can an identity of "individualized thought" be real? Effort toward self-realization brings bewilderment.

Why should this be so? The senses are said to be the great deluders. The senses persuade a portion of the knowing mind—the portion which looks outward—that reality lies in the appearance of the external world. Ought we then to abandon the senses? This is surely impossible so long as we find value in embodiment. We easily understand, abstractly, that to abandon the senses would be to give up life, to renounce incarnated existence. The instruction, however, is to learn to use them in another way. H.P.B. says:

> Theosophy rejects the testimony of the physical senses entirely, if the latter be not based upon that afforded by the psychic and spiritual perceptions. Even in the case of the most highly developed clairvoyance and clairaudience, the *final* testimony of both must be rejected, unless by those terms is signified . . . the ecstatic illumination . . . of Plotinus and of Porphyry. The same holds good for the physical sciences; the evidence of the reason upon the terrestrial plane, like that of our five senses, should receive the imprimatur of the sixth and seventh senses of the divine ego, before a fact can be accepted by the true occultist.

We begin to see that Theosophy makes a special use of our language to provide instruction in the grammar and literature of *another* language—the Mystery Language, which is a language independent of the confinements of words. The undertaking of the Teachers, then, is to put into a language fabricated from a level of illusion, the ideas, laws, and principles applying to realities which are beyond illusion. This seems plainly suggested by what one of H.P.B.'s Teachers said: "I feel irritated at having to use these three clumsy words—Past, Present, Future—miserable concepts of the objective phases of the subjective whole, they are about as ill-adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving." To this H.P.B. adds the comment: "One has to acquire true Self-Consciousness in order to understand Samvritti, or the 'origin of delusion'." Samvritti is relative truth—the kind of truth that is openly available to intelligences in manifestation. If, then, we are in manifestation, and if we, as H.P.B. indicates in "What Is Truth?", can know only relative truth, what are the grounds for hope?

Hope, it is variously made plain, lies in the fact that human life is best defined as the relative and progressive conquest of illusion. This is the meaning of the Manvantaric cycle, of the odyssey and evolution of soul. There is, then, a language, not only of a given state of illusion, but one which deals appropriately with the movement of consciousness *through* states of illusion. There is a speech animated naturally by the momentum of conscious beings toward the goal of self-knowledge. This, surely, is the Mystery Language, the language of the soul. And it is this language that we are invited to begin to read—between the lines, as it were—of the recorded teaching as set down by H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge. For there is an inner life, a hidden grammar, a *logos* within their words.

Truth, when put into a language of illusion, may often have to assume the form of paradox, of apparent contradiction. H.P.B. warns her readers of this. In a section of the *Key* entitled "The Complex Nature of Manas," she begins:

> It is this nature, mysterious, Protean, beyond any grasp, and almost shadowy in its correlations with the other principles, that is most difficult to realise, and still more so to explain. Manas is a "principle," and yet it is an "Entity" and individuality or Ego. He is a "God," and yet he is doomed to an endless cycle of incarnations, for each of which he is made respon-

> sible, and for each of which he has to suffer. All this seems as contradictory as it is puzzling; nevertheless, there are hundreds of people, even in Europe, who realise all this perfectly, for they comprehend the Ego not only in its integrity but in its many aspects.

The difficulties of explaining the mind, or Manas, she says, are even greater than realizing its nature. Why? Because, in realizing —making real—what one was not previously aware of, one overcomes only one's own ignorance, dispels but personal illusions, whereas to "explain" the mind to others brings an encounter with the organized and codified illusion of the human race. The less independent the mind of the inquirer, the greater the difficulty. How may this difficulty be described? It is necessary, we could say, to learn how to let go of certain of what seem the tools of understanding while we are using them. This need is upon us even though, at the beginning, they appear to be the only tools available. Customarily one grasps tools firmly for their correct use, but this applies to tools which are inanimate, but what if they are alive and have a nature and being of their own? And what if all the tools for acquiring real knowledge are of this character? Inner tools have qualities different from those of the tools applied to the external world.

What else can we say about the language of Theosophy? Again the *Key* is instructive:

> A maxim in the Persian "Javidan Khirad" says: "Truth is of two kinds—one manifest and self-evident; the other demanding incessantly new demonstrations and proofs." It is only when this latter kind of truth becomes as universally obvious as it is now dim, and therefore liable to be distorted by sophistry and casuistry; it is only when the two kinds of truth will have become once more one, that all people will be brought to see alike.

Theosophy, then, in one of its meanings, is a complex recording of the sort of truth which incessantly demands "new demonstrations and proofs." At the end of a lifetime of study of *The Secret Doctrine* one may find that this is indeed the case. It is a book of magnificently resourceful repetition—using various words, a multiplicity of symbols, and several conceptual levels, yet all relating to essentially the same primary realities. This is suggestively shown in the section titled "Summing Up":

> The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and

> elaborate system: *e.g.*, even in the exotericism of the Puranas. But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs. (I, 272.)

This becomes more understandable if we look for an illustration which shows the difference between the unified knowledge of a skilled craftsman and the complexity of his effort to explain his art to a beginner. For the craftsman his art has the simplicity of concerted action; for the learner the practice of the art is filled with what seem countless requirements—all the detail of all the unlearned lessons out of which the unity of practice must be gradually born.

Theosophy, then, expands the language of unity in order to cope with complexity. Having the power of intuition, we feel the unity, but using vehicles or tools made of differentiated stuff, we are bewildered and held back by the terms of detail. There is a curious result of all this—experienced as the feeling that we "know" so little, yet at the same time so much!

Moments come when we begin to feel a little at home with the language of H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine*. Conviction grows from recognizing the endless symmetries of the teaching, and meanwhile the metaphysical structures leave open spaces where the mind can work. It seems apparent, moreover, that whenever she could, H.P.B. made use of the metaphysical speculations of Western thinkers to give a measure of familiarity to the occult teaching. The *Monadology* of Leibniz is an example. She said of this seventeenth-century thinker:

> It is well known that Leibniz came several times very near the truth, but defined monadic evolution incorrectly, which is not to be wondered at, since he was not an INITIATE, nor even a Mystic, only a very intuitional philosopher. Yet no psychophysicist ever came nearer than he has to the esoteric general outline of evolution. (*S.D.*I., 619-20.)

But the philosophy also invites to less familiar avenues of approach. In "Le Phare De L'Inconnu," after the quotation which speaks of "the language of the rainbow," H.P.B. enlarges on the symbology of colors:

> The Language of the prism, of which "the seven mother colours have each seven sons," that is to say, forty-nine shades or "sons" between the seven, which graduated tints are so many

> letters or alphabetical characters. The language of colours has, therefore, fifty-six letters for the Initiate. Of these letters each septenary is absorbed by the mother colour, as each of the seven mother colours is absorbed finally in the white ray, Divine Unity symbolized by these colours.

What sort of "words," if any, one wonders, would initiates form from this alphabet? Could they be anything like the words we use, or would they be more like the forms of representation recorded so long ago "on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs"? Some clue to the power of such a language might come from thinking of the simple gesture which, as we say, "speaks volumes," or of the extraordinary facial expression which seems at once to convey both the tragedy and the splendor of human experience. Consider the import of a portrait of Abraham Lincoln.

Self-reliance is one great objective of human development, according to Theosophy. Self-reliance might be described as that state or condition of conscious egoity in which there is no longer the hungering longing to have knowledge translated into time-bound words, in order that we may understand through the laborious struggle required by the present-day "language of illusion."

How, finally, does one learn the "Mystery Language"? H.P.B. gives the answer as discovered by Ammonius Saccas. He studied all the different religions, comparing them with one another. Then, "he learned the *language of the mysteries* by teaching the common origin of all religions and a common religion."

Ammonius learned by teaching. "We," said H.P.B., "think as did Ammonius."

I call a great character one who by his actions and attitudes satisfies the claim of situations out of deep readiness to respond with his whole life, and in such a way that the sum of his actions and attitudes expresses at the same time the unity of his being in its willingness to accept responsibility.

—MARTIN BUBER

STUDIES IN ISIS UNVEILED

MAGICAL PHENOMENA—MODERN AND ANCIENT

SCIENCE is daily and rapidly moving toward the great discoveries in chemistry and physics, organology, and anthropology. Learned men ought to be free from preconceptions and prejudices of every kind; yet, although thought and opinion are now free, scientists are still the same men as of old. An Utopian dreamer is he who thinks that man ever changes with the evolution and development of new ideas. The soil may be well fertilized and made to yield with every year a greater and better variety of fruit; but, dig a little deeper than the stratum required for the crop, and the same earth will be found in the subsoil as was there before the first furrow was turned.

For many years we have watched the development and growth of that apple of discord—MODERN SPIRITUALISM. Familiar with its literature both in Europe and America, we have closely and eagerly witnessed its interminable controversies and compared its contradictory hypotheses. Many educated men and women—heterodox spiritualists, of course—have tried to fathom the Protean phenomena. The only result was that they came to the following conclusion: whatever may be the reason of these constant failures —whether such are to be laid at the door of the investigators themselves, or of the secret Force at work—it is at least proved that, in proportion as the psychological manifestations increase in frequency and variety, the darkness surrounding their origin becomes more impenetrable.

Many years of wandering among "heathen" and "Christian" magicians, occultists, mesmerizers, and the *tutti quanti* of white and black art, ought to be sufficient, we think, to give us a certain right to feel competent to take a practical view of this doubted and very complicated question. We have associated with the fakirs, the holy men of India, and seen them when in intercourse with the *Pitris*. We have watched the proceedings and *modus operandi* of the howling and dancing dervishes; held friendly communica-

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NOTE.—This article is made up of passages from *Isis Unveiled*, topically arranged. The pages from which the statements are taken are given at the conclusion of the article. This article is part of a series that was first printed in volumes 5 and 6 of THEOSOPHY.

tions with the marabouts of European and Asiatic Turkey; and the serpent-charmers of Damascus and Benares have but few secrets that we have not had the fortune to study. Therefore, when scientists who have never had an opportunity of living among these oriental jugglers and can judge at the best but superficially, tell us that there is naught in their performances but mere tricks of prestidigitation, we cannot help feeling a profound regret for such hasty conclusions. That such pretentious claims should be made to a thorough analysis of the powers of nature, and at the same time such unpardonable neglect displayed of questions of purely physiological and psychological character, and astounding phenomena rejected without either examination or appeal, is an exhibition of inconsistency, strongly savoring of timidity, if not of moral obliquity.

Learned investigators, all very skeptical as to spirits in general and "departed human spirits" in particular, during the last twenty years have taxed their brains to invent new names for an old thing. Thus, with Mr. Crookes and Sergeant Cox, it is the "psychic force." Professor Thury of Geneva calls it the "psychode" or *ectenic* force; Professor Balfour Stewart, the "electro-biological power"; Faraday, the "great master of experimental philosophy in physics," but apparently a novice in psychology, superciliously termed it an "unconscious muscular action," an "unconscious cerebration," and what not? Sir William Hamilton, a "latent thought"; Dr. Carpenter, "the ideo-motor principle," etc. So many scientists—so many names.

The psychic and ectenic forces, the "ideo-motor" and "electro-biological powers"; "latent thought" and even "unconscious cerebration" theories can be condensed in two words: the kabalistic ASTRAL LIGHT. The disputants are battling about mere words. Call the phenomena force, energy, electricity or magnetism, will, or spirit-power, it will ever be the partial manifestation of the *soul,* whether disembodied or imprisoned for a while in its body—of a portion of that intelligent, omnipotent, and individual WILL, pervading all nature, and known, through the insufficiency of human language to express correctly psychological images, as—GOD.

There are two kinds of seership—that of the soul and that of the spirit. The seership of the ancient Pythoness, or of the modern mesmerized subject, vary but in the artificial modes adopted to

induce the state of clairvoyance. But, as the visions of both depend upon the greater or less acuteness of the senses of the astral body, they differ very widely from the perfect, omniscient spiritual state; for, at best, the subject can get but glimpses of truth, through the veil which physical nature interposes. The astral principle, or mind, is the sentient soul, inseparable from our physical brain, which it holds in subjection, and is in its turn equally trammeled by it. This is the *ego,* the intellectual life-principle of man, his conscious entity. While it is yet within the material body, the clearness and correctness of its spiritual visions depend on its more or less intimate relation with its higher Principle. When this relation is such as to allow the most ethereal portions of the soul-essence to act independently of its grosser particles and of the brain, it can unerringly comprehend what it sees; then only is it the pure, rational, *super*sentient soul. That state is known in India as the *Samaddi;* it is the highest condition of spirituality known to man on earth. The Hindu terms *Pranayama, Pratyahara,* and *Dharana,* all relate to different psychological states, and show how much more the Sanskrit, and even the modern Hindu language are adapted to the clear elucidation of the phenomena that are encountered by those who study this branch of psychological science, than the tongues of modern peoples, whose experiences have not yet necessitated the invention of such descriptive terms.

When the body is in the state of *dharana*—a total catalepsy of the physical frame—the soul of the clairvoyant may liberate itself, and perceive things subjectively. And yet, as the sentient principle of the brain is alive and active, these pictures of the past, present, and future will be tinctured with the terrestrial perceptions of the objective world; the physical *memory* and *fancy* will be in the way of clear vision. But the seer-adept knows how to suspend the mechanical action of the brain. His visions will be as clear as truth itself, uncolored and undistorted, whereas, the clairvoyant, unable to control the vibrations of the astral waves, will perceive but more or less broken images through the medium of the brain. The seer can never take flickering shadows for realities, for his memory being as completely subjected to his will as the rest of the body, he receives impressions directly from his spirit. Between his subjective and objective selves there are no obstructive mediums. This is the real spiritual seership, in which, according to an expression of Plato, soul is raised above all inferior good. When we reach "that which is supreme, which is *simple, pure and unchange-*

able, without form, color, or human qualities: the God—*our Nous.*"

This is the state which such seers as Plotinus and Apollonius termed "Union to the Deity"; which the ancient *yogins* called *Isvara,* and the modern call "Samaddi"; but this state is as far above modern clairvoyance as the stars above glow-worms.

In those visions there is as little to be attributed to hallucination as in the glimpses which the scientist, by the help of his optical instrument, gets into the microscopic world. A man cannot perceive, touch, and converse with pure spirit through any of his bodily senses. Only spirit alone can talk to and see spirit; and even our astral soul, the *Doppelganger,* is too gross, too much tainted yet with earthly matter to trust entirely to its perceptions and insinuations.

How dangerous may often become *untrained* mediumship, and how thoroughly it was understood and provided against by the ancient sages, is perfectly exemplified in the case of Socrates. The old Grecian philosopher was a "medium"; hence, he had never been initiated into the Mysteries; for such was the rigorous law. But he had his "familiar spirit" as they call it, his *daimonium;* and this invisible counsellor became the cause of his death. It is generally believed that if he was not initiated into the Mysteries it was because he himself neglected to become so. But the *Secret Records* teach us that it was because he could not be admitted to participate in the sacred rites, and precisely, as we state, on account of his mediumship. There was a law against the admission not only of such as were convicted of deliberate *witchcraft,* but even of those who were known to have "a familiar spirit." The law was just and logical, because a genuine medium is more or less irresponsible; and the eccentricities of Socrates are thus accounted for in some degree. A medium must be *passive;* and if a firm believer in his "spirit-guide" he will allow himself to be ruled by the latter, not by the rules of the sanctuary. A *medium* of olden times, like the modern "medium," was subject to be *entranced* at the will and pleasure of the "power" which *controlled* him; therefore he could not well have been entrusted with the awful secrets of the final initiation, "never to be revealed under the penalty of death." The old sage, in unguarded moments of "spiritual inspiration," revealed that which he had never learned; and was therefore put to death as an atheist.

How then, with such an instance as that of Socrates, in relation to the visions and spiritual wonders at the epoptai, of the Inner Temple, can any one assert that these seers, theurgists, and thaumaturgists were all "spirit-mediums"? Neither Pythagoras, Plato, nor any of the later more important Neo-platonists; neither Iamblichus, Longinus, Proclus, nor Apollonius of Tyana, were ever mediums; for in such case they would not have been admitted to the Mysteries at all. Apart from natural "mediumship" there has existed, from the beginning of time, a mysterious science, discussed by many, but known only to a few.

The use of it is a longing toward our only true and real home —the after-life, and a desire to cling more closely to our parent spirit; abuse of it is sorcery, witchcraft, *black* magic. Between the two is placed natural "mediumship"; a soul clothed with imperfect matter, a ready agent for either the one or the other, and utterly dependent on its surroundings of life, constitutional heredity—physical as well as mental—and on the nature of the "spirits" it attracts around itself. A blessing or a curse, as fate will have it, unless the medium is purified of earthly dross.

The reason why in every age so little has been generally known of the mysteries of initiation, is twofold. The first has already been explained by more than one author, and lies in the terrible penalty following the least indiscretion. The second, is the superhuman difficulties and even dangers which the daring candidate of old had to encounter, and either conquer, or die in the attempt, when, what is still worse, he did not lose his reason. There was no real danger to him whose mind had become thoroughly spiritualized, and so prepared for every terrific sight. He who fully recognized the power of his immortal spirit, and never doubted for one moment its omnipotent protection, had naught to fear. But woe to the candidate in whom the slightest physical fear—sickly child of matter—made him lose sight and faith in his own invulnerability. He who was not wholly confident of his moral fitness to accept the burden of these tremendous secrets was doomed.

The philosophers, and especially those who were initiated into the Mysteries, held that the astral soul is the impalpable duplicate of the gross external form which we call body. It is the *perisprit* of the Kardecists and the *spirit-form* of the spiritualists. Above this internal duplicate, and illuminating it as the warm ray of the sun illuminates the earth, fructifying the germ and calling out to

spiritual vivification the latent qualities dormant in it, hovers the divine spirit. The astral *perisprit* is contained and confined within the physical body as ether in a bottle, or magnetism in magnetized iron. It is a centre and engine of force, fed from the universal supply of force, and moved by the same general laws which pervade all nature and produce all cosmical phenomena. Its inherent activity causes the incessant physical operations of the animal organism and ultimately results in the destruction of the latter by over-use and its own escape. It is the prisoner, not the voluntary tenant, of the body. It has an attraction so powerful to the external universal force, that after wearing out its casing it finally escapes to it. The stronger, grosser, more material its encasing body, the longer is the term of its imprisonment. Some persons are born with organizations so exceptional, that the door which shuts other people in from communication with the world of the astral light, can be easily unbarred and opened, and their souls can look into, or even pass into that world, and return again. Those who do this consciously, and at will, are termed magicians, hierophants, seers, adepts; those who are made to do it, either through the fluid of the mesmerizer or of "spirits," are "mediums."

Prophecies are delivered in two ways—consciously, by magicians who are able to look into the astral light; and unconsciously, by those who act under what is called inspiration. To the latter class belonged and belong the Biblical prophets and the modern trance-speakers.

There are two kinds of magnetization; the first is purely *animal*, the other transcendent, and depending on the will and knowledge of the mesmerizer, as well as on the degree of spirituality of the subject, and his capacity to receive the impressions of the astral light. But now it is next to ascertain that clairvoyance depends a great deal more on the former than on the latter. To the power of an adept, the most *positive* subject will have to submit. If his sight is ably directed by the mesmerizer, magician, or spirit, the light must yield up its most secret records to our scrutiny; for, if it is a book which is ever closed to those "who see and do not perceive," on the other hand it is ever opened for one who *wills* to see it opened. It keeps an unmutilated record of all that was, that is, or ever will be. The minutest acts of our lives are imprinted on it, and even our thoughts rest photographed on its eternal tablets. It is the book which we see opened by the angel in the *Reve-*

lation, "which is the Book of life, and out of which the dead are judged according to their works." It is, in short, the MEMORY OF GOD!

It is on the indestructible tablets of the astral light that is stamped the impression of every thought we think, and every act we perform; and that future events—effects of long-forgotten causes—are already delineated as a vivid picture for the eye of the seer and the prophet to follow. Memory—the despair of the materialist, the enigma of the psychologist, the sphinx of science—is to the student of old philosophies merely a name to express that power which man unconsciously exerts, and shares with many of the inferior animals—to look with inner sight into the astral light, and there behold the images of past sensations and incidents. Instead of searching the cerebral ganglia for "micrographs of the living and the dead, of scenes that we have visited, of incidents in which we have borne a part," they went to the vast repository where the records of every man's life as well as every pulsation of the visible cosmos are stored up for all Eternity!

That flash of memory which is traditionally supposed to show a drowning man every long-forgotten scene of his mortal life—as the landscape is revealed to the traveller by intermittent flashes of lightning—is simply the sudden glimpse which the struggling soul gets into the silent galleries where his history is depicted in imperishable colors.

Dreams, forebodings, prescience, prognostications and presentiments are impressions left by our astral spirit on our brain, which receives them more or less distinctly, according to the proportion of blood with which it is supplied during the hours of sleep. The more the body is exhausted, the freer is the spiritual man, and the more vivid the impressions of our soul's memory.

No man, however gross and material he may be, can avoid leading a double existence; one in the visible universe, the other in the invisible. The life-principle which animates his physical frame is chiefly in the astral body; and while the more animal portions of him rest, the more spiritual ones know neither limits nor obstacles. If we study Plato and the philosophers of old, we may readily perceive that while the *"irrational soul,"* by which Plato meant our astral body, or the more ethereal representation of ourselves, can have at best only a more or less prolonged continuity of existence beyond the grave; the divine spirit—wrongly

termed *soul,* by the Church—is immortal by its very essence.

If the life-principle is something apart from the astral spirit and in no way connected with it, why is it that the intensity of the clairvoyant powers depends so much on the bodily prostration of the subject? The deeper the trance, the less signs of life the body shows, the clearer become the spiritual perceptions, and the more powerful are the soul's visions. The soul, disburdened of the bodily senses, shows activity of power in a far greater degree of intensity than it can in a strong, healthy body.

But though during its brief sojourn on earth our soul may be assimilated to a light hidden under a bushel, it still shines more or less bright and attracts to itself the influences of kindred spirits; and when a thought of good or evil import is begotten in our brain, it draws to it *impulses* of like nature as irresistibly as the magnet attracts iron filings. This attraction is also proportionate to the intensity with which the thought-impulse makes itself felt in the ether; and so it will be understood how one man may impress himself upon his own epoch so forcibly, that the influence may be carried—through the ever-interchanging currents of energy between the two worlds, the visible and the invisible—from one succeeding age to another, until it affects a large portion of mankind.

The medium is but an ordinary person who is magnetized by influx from the astral light. The intensity and permanency of mediumistic power is in proportion to the saturation of the medium with the magnetic or astral force. This condition of saturation may be congenital, or brought about in any one of these ways: by the mesmeric process; by spirit-agency; or by self-will. As to the process of self-saturation, the ecstatic so enormously reinforces his will-power, as to draw into himself, as into a vortex, the potencies resident in the astral light to supplement his own natural store.

It is the denial of the boundless and endless Entity, possessor of that invisible Will which for lack of a better term call God, that lies the powerlessness of every materialistic science to explain the occult phenomena. It is in the rejection *a priori* of everything which might force them to cross the boundary of exact science and step into the domain of psychological, or, if we prefer, metaphysical physiology, that we find the secret cause of their discomfiture by the manifestations, and their absurd theories to account for them. It is easier by far to deny the reality of such

manifestations from a secure distance, than find for them a proper place among the classes of natural phenomena accepted by exact science. And how can they, since all such phenomena pertain to psychology, and the latter, with its occult and mysterious powers, is a *terra incognita* for modern science.

The highest visions, the most *truthful*, are produced, not through *natural* ecstatics or "mediums," as it is sometimes erroneously asserted, but through a regular discipline of gradual initiations and development of psychical powers.

The AUM contains the evocation of the Vedic triad. It is the trinity of man himself, on his way to become immortal through the solemn union of his inner triune SELF—the exterior, gross body, the husk not even being taken into consideration in this human trinity. Ceres-Demeter and her earthly wanderings in search of her daughter are the euhemerized descriptions of one of the most metaphysico-psychological subjects ever treated of by human mind. It is a mask for the transcendent narrative of the initiated seers; the celestial vision of the freed soul of the initiate of the last hour describing the process by which the soul that has not yet been incarnated descends for the first time into matter. The Lesser Mysteries signify *occultly* the condition of the unpurified soul invested with an earthly body, and enveloped in a material and physical nature. The body is the sepulchre, the prison of the soul. The astral soul is placed between matter (body) and the highest intellect (its immortal spirit or *nous*). Which of those two will conquer? The result of the battle of life lies between the triad. It is a question of a few years of physical enjoyment on earth and—if it has begotten abuse—of the dissolution of the earthly body being followed by death of the astral body, which thus is prevented from being united with the highest spirit of the triad, which alone confers on us individual immortality; or, on the other hand, of becoming immortal mystae; initiated before death of the body into the divine truths of the after-life. Demigods below, and GODS above.

"In ancient India, the mystery of the triad, known but to the initiates, could not, under the penalty of death, be revealed to the vulgar," says Vrihaspati.

Neither could it in the ancient Grecian and Samothracian Mysteries. *Nor can it be now.* It is in the hands of the adepts, and must remain a mystery to the world so long as the materialistic

savant regards it as an undemonstrated fallacy, an insane hallucination, and the dogmatic theologian, a snare of the Evil One.

Subjective communication with the human, god-like spirits of those who have preceded us to the silent land of bliss, is in India divided into three categories. Under the spiritual training of a guru the neophyte begins *to feel* them. Were he not under the immediate guidance of an adept, he would be controlled by the invisibles, and utterly at their mercy, for among these subjective influences he is unable to discern the good from the bad. Happy the sensitive who is sure of the purity of his spiritual atmosphere! But the guru's influence is there; it is the most powerful shield against the intrusion of the *bhutna** into the atmosphere of the neophyte.

By those who have followed us thus far, it will naturally be asked, to what practical issue this book tends; much has been said about magic and its potentiality, much of the immense antiquity of its practice. Do we wish to affirm that the occult sciences ought to be studied and practiced throughout the world? Would we replace modern spiritualism with the ancient magic? Neither; the substitution could not be made, nor the study universally prosecuted, without incurring the risk of enormous public dangers. A sorcerer is a public enemy, and mesmerism may most readily be turned into the worst of sorceries.

We would have neither scientists, theologians, nor spiritualists turn practical magicians, but all to realize that there was true science, profound religion, and genuine phenomena before this modern era. We would that all who have a voice in the education of the masses should first know and then *teach* that the safest guides to human happiness and enlightenment are those writings which have descended to us from the remotest antiquity; and that nobler spiritual aspirations and a higher average morality prevail in the countries where the people take their precepts as the rule of their lives. We would have all to realize that magical, *i.e.*, spiritual powers exist in every man, and those few to practice them who feel called to teach, and are ready to pay the price of discipline and self-conquest which their development exacts.

Besides, there are many good reasons why the study of magic, except in its broad philosophy, is nearly impracticable in Europe

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**Bhutna*, a variant spelling of *Bhuts*, *i.e.* "spooks," elementaries, vampires, the *larvae* or *reliquae* of degraded human beings, the still living but disembodied consciousness of suicides, etc.

and America. Magic being what it is, the most difficult of all sciences to learn experimentally—its acquisition is practically beyond the reach of the majority of white-skinned people; and that, whether their effort is made at home or in the East. Probably not more than one man in a million of European blood is fitted—either physically, morally, or psychologically—to become a practical magician, and not one in ten millions would be found endowed with all these three qualifications as required for the work. To become a neophyte, one must be ready to devote himself heart and soul to the study of mystic sciences. Magic—most imperative of mistresses—brooks no rival. Unlike other sciences, a theoretical knowledge of formulae without mental capacities or soul powers, is utterly useless in magic. The spirit must hold in complete subjection the combativeness of what is loosely termed educated reason, until facts have vanquished cold human sophistry.

NOTE.—The volume and page references to *Isis Unveiled*, from which the foregoing article is compiled, are, in the order of the excerpts, as follows: i, 40, 42-3, 55, 58; ii, 590, 591, 117-19; i, 197-8, 200-1, 178-9, 180-81, 499, 500, 61, 45-6; ii, 114, 111, 112, 115, 634, 635, 636.

MAN'S PLACE IN NATURE

The lower nature is impermanent and changing, but the invisible man within is the one who makes the changes, who forces on the changes, and who gathers experience and knowledge through them. There is no static condition for any instrument whatever in all the kingdoms, in all the worlds and in all systems. Never-ceasing motion, the power to move on and on, in greater and greater ranges of perception, is the birth-right of every human being. We are like the one who went out from his father's house and dwelt among the swine and fed upon husks. The time must come for us to say, like the prodigal son, "I will arise and return to my Father"—I will arise and resume my own real place in Nature; using all the instruments that I have, I will work to the end that all beings may share in all knowledge, that they may progress in a consecutive range of steps, ever on and upward, without the breaks and obstacles that a false conception of our nature brings about. Such is the whole object of the ancient Wisdom Religion—that man may resume his own birthright.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

letters • questions • comment

Why do the sayings and writings of great Teachers always have an ambiguous aspect, sometimes even when they are presented in quite specific terms?

This seems to be a natural and necessary means of accommodating to the law of growth of the human mind. Lao-tse, for instance, said, "The Tao that can be uttered is not the real Tao." This suggests the reason for seeking dual or even multiple meanings, as factors in every idea we consider. It cannot mean that the Tao that can be spoken of is false in the sense of deceiving or worthless. The intention is rather to point to the fact that the quality of permanence should not be attributed to the impermanent, and the names of things, which alter with understanding, are impermanent. There is always the meaning which can be communicated at a given time, and the one that must be discovered to be beyond words. The former is the communication between reader and author, or between teacher and pupil, that urges a further search for meaning, since any achieved or realized meaning will eventually be transcended. The meaning that must be discovered—in fact, continually re-discovered—results from the union of the knower with the thing to be known. This is an act of creation, not a transmission of word or idea.

The capacity to distinguish between forms and their ensouling spirit, in this sense, is indeed an unending process. In anything that we behold, whether the grossest form or the subtlest idea, there will be meaning underlying meaning, the more disclosed as we study it. By the mind open to the idea of the universe as embodied consciousness, this might be conceived as a continuous translation of the perception of the world as an aggregation of separate selves into awareness of increasing unities, and, finally, the one Reality within the hearts of all beings—their moving force, whatever their apparent nature.

While external meanings are not, by definition, false, they are turned, with disturbing frequency, into mere perversions of some underlying truth. How does a useful formulation become a trap for men's minds instead of a tool? One answer would be that this

happens whenever too much finality is attached to some tool of thought, a tool developed for a limited application or use. Giving finality to a limited formulation shuts the perceiver out from undiscovered areas which remain to be known. The power of anticipating what is to be learned becomes dormant. When the illimitable source of creative action, present in every man, is so confined, there is a restriction of the very power to learn itself. This power needs to be recognized as beyond all knowledge, and whenever this position is abandoned in favor of some momentarily comfortable finality, a frustration or distortion of mind results. The capacity for change or progress has been replaced by static conformity.

Thus any teaching intended to have enduring value—that is, to serve as inspiration for more than one generation, or even centuries—must be formulated in a way that exercises the full ranges of mental capacity, and at the same time discourages the tendency to codify finite views.

A basic tenet of Theosophy is that each man is himself the proper judge of what is right for him. But what justification is there for relying on our own capacity when we so often lack the knowledge to make good judgments?

But do we indeed lack the capacity to make good judgments? This capacity is innate in all humans, although skill in its exercise must be acquired. The variables that make the differences among men in the application of judgment are time and individual development. The doctrine of man as a seven-principled being is useful in considering such problems. If man is composed of but a body physically, and a vague, homogeneous mass of thought and feelings psychologically, then there indeed exists in him no inner structure enabling him to gauge value, form judgments, or even determine the usefulness of any knowledge he acquires. All conclusions, if this were the case, would be but relativities. But this is not the whole truth, since we have, inescapably, an awareness of all this relativity and an intuition of something beyond it. In any area of activity, on any plane of action, there is always possible a degree of reflective consciousness of the action. Consciousness extends through all planes. Wherever consciousness is present, judgment may be exercised. Every human being has the capacity to see contrast in some terms and draw a conclusion about its values. All the rest is but an expansion of this faculty

to ever wider applications, more subtle recognitions of how consciousness functions at differing levels of awareness. But the *fact* of awareness itself never changes.

In the *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* Mr. Judge speaks of this awareness as the primary reality of the human being:

> Our consciousness is *one* and not many, nor different from other consciousnesses. It is not *waking consciousness* or *sleeping consciousness,* or any other but *consciousness itself*. . . .
>
> The one consciousness of each person is the Witness or Spectator of the actions and experiences of every state we are in or pass through. It therefore follows that the waking condition of the mind is not separate consciousness.
>
> The one consciousness pierces up and down through all the states or planes of Being, and serves to uphold the memory—whether complete or incomplete—of each state's experiences.
>
> Thus in waking life, *Sat* experiences fully and knows. In dream state, *Sat* again knows and sees what goes on there, while there may not be in the brain a complete memory of the waking state just quitted. In Sushupti—beyond dream and yet on indefinitely, *Sat* still knows all that is done or heard or seen.

Quite evidently the one consciousness—Atma, Buddhi, Manas—assumes many forms, all aspects derived from this one consciousness. At one level of this process it generates a false sense of "I," identified as the cloak of matter which it then mistakes for itself. But even this illusion is part of the natural development of the Ego's need for embodiment and experience. By means of this identification—that is, the overcoming of it—knowledge of both good and evil, or discrimination, is accumulated. In "Dialogue on the Mysteries of the After Life," H.P.B. says:

> In Occultism, every qualificative change in the state of our consciousness gives to man a new aspect, and if it prevails and becomes part of the living and acting Ego, it must be (and is) given a special name, to distinguish the man in that particular state from the man he is when he places himself in another state. . . . man acts on this, or another plane of consciousness, in strict accordance with his mental and spiritual condition.

The power of judgment is present at all times in all conditions. The excellence of particular judgments results from using all the different manifestations of consciousness in a way that increases one's awareness of being part of a whole.

on the lookout

"Cylic Return of Impressions"

The assertion, in recent years, that certain drugs, medically identified as hallucinogens, can induce in their takers the experience of "spiritual" states, and the formation of sects justifying the taking of such drugs as a "religious" rite—as in the case of Southwestern Indian tribes which use mescal buttons in this way —recalls a question from a reader concerning such practices, published, with a reply, in the *Theosophist* for August, 1883. The reader alleged that nearly all the Indian *Sannyasis* and *Sadhus* were in the habit of smoking *ganja* (Indian hemp) and drinking *bhang* (a hemp derivative), and wondered why such a class of "ascetics" should indulge in this custom. Theosophy, he said, insists on total abstinence frfom wine and spiritous drink by those seeking occult knowledge, but what about the use of narcotics?

Texts Perverted

The reply, by Tara Nath, published by H.P.B., said that narcotic drugs are "as much prohibited as spiritous liquors for the development of psychic powers." The justification of such practices by *sadhus* is explained as the result of a misreading of ancient texts:

> In a Telugu work on Occultism we understand that "Ramarasapanam" is recommended as necessary for Yogees. *Ramarasapanam* is the name by which a kind of liquor is known. The word is explained in another work as a technical term *for a particular kind of meditation!* Occultists have always used conventional terms in their works, the key being entirely in their hands; while such of the outsiders as had spiritual yearnings without the necessary qualifications, began interpreting them exoterically and, perverting the text, adopted such customs. With the growth and popularization of such practices, self-studying Occultists (?) had diverged farther and farther from the Truth until at last the two systems can no longer be easily reconciled.

In the *Theosophist* for March of that year, a writer—probably H.P.B.—had remarked:

> . . . a *Sadhu* who uses ganja and sooka—intoxicant drugs—is but a sham ascetic. Instead of leading his followers to Moksha, he does but drag them along with himself into the ditch, notwithstanding his walking and sleeping on spikes. A pretty business, that, for a religious teacher!

Defenders of "Desire"

While various learned psychologists, in papers contributed to professional journals, are now suggesting parallels between drug-induced experience and the higher planes of consciousness spoken of in Eastern psychology, there are Western thinkers who detect the fallacy in all such assumptions. For example, Jacob Needleman remarks in *The New Religions*:

> My own impression of many drug users, even the most intelligent and sophisticated, and even those who write so brilliantly about it, is that they lack [the] remarkable quality of acceptance. Rather, they defend and adore their desire. . . . It is a well-known theory that what are called the mind-expanding drugs act, really, as inhibitors of certain mental or emotional functions, thus "releasing" others. Whether this is physiologically true or not, those who take drugs consistently report that the ordinary categorizing and logical function of the mind disappears in the drug experience. In the absence of this functioning, the world takes on an incredible beauty and power, things come alive in their exquisite variety; the universe changes each moment, colors, sounds, tastes become ends in themselves.

Suppression of the "Ordinary"

> But all of this, remarkable as it may be in one sense, has no relationship to the Buddhist idea of enlightenment. For, the drug experience is still based on the idea of exclusion and on the judgment that the "ordinary" state of what is called being "uptight" needs to be destroyed or suppressed. But enlightenment involves, rather, the experience of this "uptightness," this ordinary mind. . . . No one will deny that the drug experience is extraordinary. But what does that mean: "extraordinary"? It means, among other things, that certain standards are fulfilled, certain personal criteria are met or even surpassed. But where do these standards and requirements come from? From oneself, obviously; they are yet another expression or form of desire. And so, it is the direct experiencing of these requirements or desires, rather than the satisfaction of them, that constitutes a moment of enlightenment. It is a question

of the experience of the ordinary, rather than the search for extraordinary experience.

Withdrawal from Community

Martin Buber's discussion of Aldous Huxley's defense of the use of mescalin for "spiritual" purposes, noted recently in Lookout, seems parallel and illustrative of Mr. Needleman's criticism. Huxley, Buber notes, speaks of "chemical holidays," but these are holidays from "the community of logos and cosmos"—actually, a withdrawal from the responsibility of each one to his fellows. In Buber's view, the drug-taker with "religious" pretensions seeks satisfaction of personal desire as well as isolation from others. It is the *environment* which becomes a thrilling experience, not the fraternity of humans, during the drug experience. One sees here the meaning of the *Theosophist* contributor in speaking of those who had "spiritual yearnings without the necessary qualifications," and who, perverting ancient texts, adopted the custom of using drugs. Without the fundamental concern of altruism and the deliberate practice of brotherhood, deeply erroneous conceptions easily take root and grow in those who seek personal development. Only in the motive of service to others will the aspirant find defense against the deceptions of the Hall of Learning, the astral region where the Soul "will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled."

Separate Selves

Now that Lewis Thomas, the medical researcher who heads the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, has been catapulted to fame by the deserved success of his book, *Lives of a Cell,* the better magazines are inviting him to do reviews. He appears in the November 1975 *Harper's* to give attention to *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* by Edward O. Wilson, but since he contributes a review-essay rather than an account of the book alone, what he says may be independently considered. It is well worth considering. He begins by showing the biological ground for the strength of the feeling of separate identity:

> Most of us spend our days in an anxious effort to certify, once and for all, our individuality. Our lifelong concern, perhaps more in this century than at any other time, is to identify ourselves as solitary, pure selves, distinguishable from all the rest. It should be no surprise that we do this. The biological uniqueness of each self is the second most conspicuous and spectacular attribute of human beings. Each of us is funda-

> mentally different from everyone else. . . . We are biochemically labeled as individuals, and our molecular configurations are as unique as fingerprints.

United Selves

He goes on, piling up evidence from physiology, then offers his surprise—probably the *first* most "conspicuous and spectacular attribute"—that we are at the same time "even more compulsively attached, interdependent, and social than the famous social insects." Among the numerous means by which we are linked with our fellows, and the one Dr. Thomas selects as the most powerful in its unifying effect, is language—"we have been compulsively and unconsciously consumed by this activity for longer than we remember, guided, it is said, by structures in our brains that are genetically made for the recognition of syntax, the generation of grammar, and the invention of metaphors." One would think, he seems to be saying, that all this had been deliberately planned! Then he asks: "Why is it that we are at the same time the most intensely individualistic of animals, and the most ardently social?" The question, of course, demands a philosophic answer, even a metaphysical analysis, but Dr. Lewis is a scientist who, instead of speculating, takes us through a rapid course on the history of the scientific study of social animals, mostly insects, to acquaint us with what is now known about the social devices of nature.

The Law of Laws

The book by Prof. Wilson is apparently filled with such material: "It is an ocean of fact, in which the facts are adrift like plankton," and it is difficult to find the fact you are looking for in all this incredible wealth of biological material. What do the social animals or insects do for one another through such close association and interrelation? Well, they survive. What is the means of their survival, in fact and in principle? The answer to this question, presumably emphasized in Prof. Wilson's book, comes at the end of the review:

> The central problem to be solved, before the behavior of any social species—including human society, most of all human society—can be comprehended, turns out to be *altruism*. How are such phenomena as giving away or even sharing or self-destruction in aid of others, which are the hallmarks identifying social organizations in nature, to be explained in Darwinian terms?

Dr. Thomas does not recall Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* as a forerunner of this theme, written close to a century ago, also in behalf of the solution of human conflicts, nor does he cite the passage in *The Voice of the Silence* which says that Compassion is the Law of Laws. He says simply that perhaps we shall have to conclude that "a society with an optimal distribution of genes for altruism will succeed and survive, because such a society gains stability and cohesion when it contains members whose lives are constantly being laid on the line for the common good."

More Than He Says

Dr. Thomas also says:

> It is surprising to find a word like altruism now used as a fully technical term, almost a part of the jargon of contemporary biology. It has in fact become an indispensable term, describing a behavior which is as near to being universal as anything else in nature, and no other word will suit as well. Sociobiology as a developing science is founded and focused on the need for understanding this crucial aspect of life. It is a wonder.

It is indeed wonderful, and delighting as well, to find scientists making such a declaration. The timing seems appropriate, and its implications seem rich for the future practice of biological science, and for all the other areas of learning in which biology is influential. It might be remarked that finding out that altruism is the law of life from the synthesized facts of biology is, so to speak, seeing through a glass darkly, yet to have this principle recognized at all is surely an auspicious sign. Such investigators may indeed see through a glass darkly, but the glass can be expected to become lighter all the time. And such scientists as Dr. Thomas deserve both close attention and appreciative regard from readers who feel able to find in his work considerably more, perhaps, than he actually meant to say.

The System of Science

Back in the 1890's, William James explained the attitude of most scientists quite clearly. In *Psychology: Briefer Course,* he said: "A psychologist wants to build a Science; and a science is a system of fixed relations." This means, he went on to explain, that the "independent variables" represented by action resulting from free will are ruled out by this conception of science. Science cannot take cognizance of activities which are by definition un-

predictable, so they are ignored, at least in theory, and commonly in practice—"most actual psychologists have no hesitation in denying that free-will exists." Prof. James did not himself regard this as sound psychology, although he declared that he was going to practice physiological, no-free-will psychology, simply to prove that it wouldn't work, or was insufficient for understanding human behavior. It has taken more than fifty years for psychologists to decide that mechanistic psychology is not good psychology—that humans are in some sense free and make real choices in their lives; and only a minority—the humanistic psychologists—now express this viewpoint in one way or another.

Nature a Foursome

Some interesting reflections on modern physics by a writer in the November 1975 *Atlantic*—Fred Hapgood—indicate the foundation of Prof. James's explanation of Science in the basic outlook of physicists. After a not exactly lucid discussion of "quarks" —the new particles in physical theory useful for bundling together the hundreds of "elementary" particles—he speaks of the two "families" of particles, leptons and quarks, which each have four subdivisions. Then he says:

> This picture, added to the well-established scheme of four fundamental forces (electromagnetism; gravity; the "strong" interaction, which holds protons together in the nucleus; and the "weak," which allows radioactive decay), culminates in an overall design that is subtly interrelated and has substantial aesthetic appeal. One imagines that Thales, whatever difficulties he might have with details, would be pleased to find that nature, even at these levels of intricacy, still seems to have a fondness for spelling matters out four at a time.

Choiceless and Submissive?

The last thing Mr. Hapgood wants to suggest is that there is any finality about these particles or present physical theory. The search for greater "fundamentality" is bound to go on. Somewhat playfully, he asks:

> Why do we bother? The single textbook answer is that we have to understand the laws of nature. This explanation has had great success; one grasps it intuitively. . . . And yet, a reading of the history of science suggests a more ambiguous emphasis. In some degree we appear to be looking for laws not *of* nature but *for* nature. It is as though we are possessed by the fear that nature could suddenly become something else,

> and we have set out to quiet that anxiety by proving, logically, that nature has no free will, that it can only be what it is, that it can never have any choice in the matter.

Here Mr. Hapgood seems to be saying that only a choiceless, mechanically explainable nature will give the scientists the security they long for. Yet he also says:

> I think we have come far enough to recognize that the belief that we can get to a point and say, "Past here there are no other questions," has a parallel with the conviction . . . that somewhere up ahead . . . there is a line, and once that line is found and crossed, things will be different.

The Sphere of Causes

They *will* be different, if the "line" here referred to can be identified as H.P.B. identified it in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 477):

> Science cannot, owing to the very nature of things, unveil the mystery of the universe around us. Science can, it is true, collect, classify, and generalize upon phenomena: but the occultist, arguing from admitted metaphysical data, declares that the daring explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer his consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes. To effect this, he must develop faculties which are absolutely dormant—save in a few rare and exceptional cases—in the constitution of the off-shoots of our present Fifth Root-race in Europe and America. He can in no other conceivable manner collect the facts on which to base his speculations. Is this not apparent on the principles of Inductive Logic and Metaphysics alike?

Promethean Wondering?

The struggle of science to make the universe work on purely mechanistic principles—ruling out the possibility of mechanicians behind the scenes—recalls the parallel struggle of Zeus to control and manage the regime of earth without the intrusion of *Mind*—the fire of invention, of forethought and imagination—which Prometheus brought to mankind. Prometheus will be freed, and Science liberated from its materialistic assumptions, only at a time in the future when the egos still held in the grip of sense experience begin to break through the barriers of illusion. When that will be remains to be seen. But the philosophizing, open-minded mood of some contemporary physicists indicates at least a weakening of the bonds. Physics, these days, is becoming very psychological,

if not metaphysical and philosophical. Mr. Hapgood asks in one place:

> What will we see when nothing in nature occludes our vision with mystery? The face of God? Titanic boredom? Our own face, peering back from the other side of the universe? Nothing at all? The answer is not built in, just the drive to get to that point, and the intuition that when we do so, our relation to the universe will be a settled matter.

While this intuition may not be mistaken, its reliance on the study of "particles" seems sadly misplaced. The nature of things will not be settled from locating at last the ultimate bits of matter, but in discoveries in consciousness, through which alone matter can be known and understood.

Rhetorical Question

Dozens of books on the psychic and psychic experience are now coming out each year, and no one can keep up with them all, or needs to, since most of these popular volumes have either a lurid or a dull similarity to all the others. Psychism is in full swing, and the books on "expansion of consciousness"—a misuse of language to begin with—seem even more numerous than those concerned with psychic phenomena and research. One book in the latter category, however, deserves some attention, since it is sober-minded, honest, and covers the main developments in psychic research or experiment since the days of the London Society of Psychical Research of H.P.B.'s time. This volume is *The Psychic Realm: What Can You Believe?* (Random House, 1975) by Naomi Hintze and Gaither Pratt. Mrs. Hintze is a novelist of some reputation who writes from the viewpoint of the intelligent layman; Prof. Pratt was long associated with J. B. Rhine in the Parapsychological Laboratory at Duke University and is author of a book on ESP.

"No Inkling" of Explanation

The Psychic Realm has a common-sense quality which students troubled by the extravagance of the "occult explosion" will find a relief. Mrs. Hintze confesses to an interest in psychic phenomena, and has followed the work of professional scholars in this field, but reveals her own approach by saying: "My ignorance of statistical evaluation, for instance, is equalled if not surpassed by my fervent desire not to have it explained to me." She is no eager

believer, but a cautious if curious investigator. Her reports on present-day psychic happenings in telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, poltergeists, and healing are of moderate interest. Both writers contribute to each chapter, Dr. Pratt adding technical and historical background and giving the viewpoint of parapsychological science. There is a good chapter on "Patience Worth," the strangely talented Elizabethan "poet" whose verses were psychically recorded by a St. Louis housewife, Pearl Curran, early in this century. (See THEOSOPHY 16:86.)

In general, the book adds little to the resources of the student of Theosophy. The unpretentious common sense of the writers may be appreciated, their admissions of uncertainty respected, and their faint gestures in the direction of philosophical explanation understood as all that can be expected in a work subject to the limitations of the "scientific approach." How, after all, can there be any explanation of happenings which are outside the range of ordinary sense experience, unless metaphysical hypotheses are allowed? Concerning "precognition" or seeing a future event, Dr. Pratt says:

> At present we do not have the slightest inkling of how precognition could be explained if it really does occur. If we had a theory that made sense of direct knowledge of future events, this should speed the progress of research—or at least make the problem one to challenge the research efforts of more scientists.

A Godlike Power

The idea that there is in the human being a level of perception and a power of cognition which may give access to the plane of causes is an ancient teaching, explained metaphysically in Theosophy by the sevenfold nature of man and the capacities of the higher ego. The "Ego-Self," Madame Blavatsky says in *Transactions* (p. 69), has the power to impress the physical shell with prophetic insight when the brain and sympathies are in closer relation to the Higher Ego. This is indeed a theory that makes sense of "direct knowledge of future events," but requires, as an initial assumption, the Theosophical conception of the higher Ego—the triad of Atma-Buddhi-Manas—as a being which is quasi-omniscient when freed of the trammels of matter. Could this Ego manifest through the personality uninterruptedly, and without

impediment, "there would be no longer men on earth, but we should all be gods." (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 131.)

An interesting portion of the chapter on survival after death quotes from an investigator who compiled the testimony of seventeen hundred persons with close contact with the dying. Reporting on the "visions" which sometimes come at the time of death, he said that they were of two sorts: "the first he calls 'Disneyland'—rambling, based on this-world concerns; and the second he calls 'mountain' experiences, which seemed to be consistent with the idea of another world." Conceivably, visions of the latter sort were egoic anticipations of a life apart from the body, possible because of the loosening ties of the physical organism, in contrast with purely personal recollections.

A "Profound Effect"

The possibility of reincarnation is dealt with in the last chapter, Prof. Pratt suggesting that the research of Dr. Ian Stevenson earns this place of distinction in the book. One of the cases the latter reports, that of an Indian boy who remembered his past life, and whose recollections were broadly confirmed, is in some ways reminiscent of Lafcadio Hearn's report of the story of Katsugoro (See THEOSOPHY 16:224). Prof. Pratt comments:

> I do not say that the findings prove reincarnation. But I emphatically say that this could well be the ultimate outcome of the new field of research that he [Dr. Stevenson] has, almost singlehandedly, opened up. And if we can all put aside our Western prejudices for a time, we might all agree that the concept of a "spirit" of a human being, often of someone who died early in life from acts of violence, being able to take up a new abode in an infant human body is one that will, if fully established and generally accepted, profoundly affect our outlook on life.

Interestingly, in 1968 Dr. Stevenson observed that his work had taken him to lands where belief in reincarnation is, as he put it, "axiomatic." When he questioned such people, they expressed "astonishment or amusement that money should be spent in the investigation of something so obviously true." It is certainly the case that the belief has a "profound effect" on their outlook on life, as was shown, years ago, in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 246):

> Look at the millions of poor and uneducated Buddhists and Hindoos, to whom Karma and re-incarnation are solid realities, simply because their minds have never been cramped and dis-

> torted by being forced into an unnatural groove. . . . And the Buddhists, note well, live up to their beliefs without a murmur against Karma, or what they regard as a just punishment; whereas the Christian populace neither lives up to its moral ideal, nor accepts its lot contentedly. Hence murmuring and dissatisfaction, and the intensity of the struggle for existence in Western lands.

"Deep Down" Conviction

Perhaps the work of Dr. Stevenson will have the effect of making belief in reincarnation more conventionally acceptable in the West. It seems as likely, however, that the inherent appeal of the idea, as the decline of Western, one-life religious beliefs continues, will before long give it the almost universal persuasion it has in many other parts of the world. The present-day popularity of the term "Karma," while far from indicating complete understanding, is good evidence of the ongoing change in human attitudes. Moreover, the part played by such ancient conceptions in the everyday life of Eastern peoples is impressing some of the most thoughtful present-day observers. In *Gandhi's Truth,* after pages of discussion of the Hindu teachings of rebirth, life-stages, caste, and dharma, Erik Erikson points out how effective these ideas are in helping the individual to order his own life. Speaking of their psychological value, Dr. Erikson remarks: "There is much in dharma, then, which we have conceptualized as Ego, if understood as that which integrates the individual experience and yet is always communal in nature." He adds: "If individuals depend on each other for a maximum and optimum of *mutual activation, dharma* is a consolidation of the world through self-realization of each individual within a joint order." In another place, Dr. Erikson says: "And, let us face it: 'deep down' nobody in his right mind *can* visualize his own existence without assuming that he has always lived and will live hereafter. . . ."

How different this expression from what might have been expected of a psychoanalyst or psychologist of twenty-five or fifty years ago! The mood of the Western world is changing, and rebirth is now widely entertained as the most reasonable and naturally acceptable form of immortality. Meanwhile, such books as *The Psychic Realm* are useful in showing the attitude of responsible and conscientious inquirers into matters that will be well understood only in years to come.